

WILLINGHAM ♦ BUCKINGHAM ♦ LEIALOHA

FABLES

108

INHERIT
the
WIND



VERTIGO

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suggested for mature readers

HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

CHAPTER
ONE OF
*Inherit
the Wind*

OKAY,
HERE WE
GO!

BILL WILLINGHAM
writer-creator
MARK BUCKINGHAM
penciller

STEVE LEIALOHA LEE LOUGHRIDGE
inker colors

TODD JOAO GREGORY SMELLY
KLEIN RUAS LOCKARD BOND
letters cover asst. ed. editor





OH.
I GUESS
WE'RE ALREADY
HERE.

FLY'S
TRANSPORTATION
MAGIC SEEMS TO
WORK FASTER
EVERY TIME.

NO
APPARENT
DANGER,
ROSE.

NO
IMMEDIATE
SENSE OF
FOREIGN
SPELLS.



THE FARM SEEMS DESERTED.

YEAH, BUT WE CAN'T COUNT ON THAT. CLARA, TAKE THE HIGH WATCH.

YOU GOT IT, BOSS.



BAGHEERA, PLEASE CHECK OUT THE FORESTS.

I'M ALREADY GONE.

AND I'LL SNIFF OUT THE MAGIC STATUS IN DETAIL.



REPORT EARLY AND OFTEN. KEEP A WARY EYE OUT FOR ANYTHING UNUSUAL.



WHO KNOWS WHAT TRAPS MISTER DARK MIGHT HAVE LEFT FOR US.



THE KINGDOM OF HAVEN.

I *STILL* THINK IT WAS A MISTAKE LETTING ROSE RED LEAD THE FIRST EXCURSION BACK TO THE FARM.

SHE'S *HARDLY* OUR MOST FORMIDABLE WARRIOR.

BUT SHE RUNS THE FARM, SO IT WAS HER PREROGATIVE.

AND SHE OFTEN *SURPRISES* US, SHOWING HERSELF MORE RESOURCEFUL THAN WE SUSPECT.

BIGBY SHOULD HAVE GONE.

I AGREE, BUT BIGBY'S NOT--

HE'S STILL GOING THROUGH A *BAD* PATCH.

NOT JUST HIM. SNOW, TOO. JUST AS OUR CRISIS SEEMED TO END, THEY WERE HANDED A *NEW* PILE OF TROUBLES.

IN ANY CASE, HE WASN'T HERE TO DRAFT INTO SERVICE.

WHY IS THAT, FLY? WHAT DO YOU KNOW THAT HAS EVERYONE ELSE *STUMPED*? THEY VAMOOSED BEFORE THE *REAL* CELEBRATIONS STARTED.

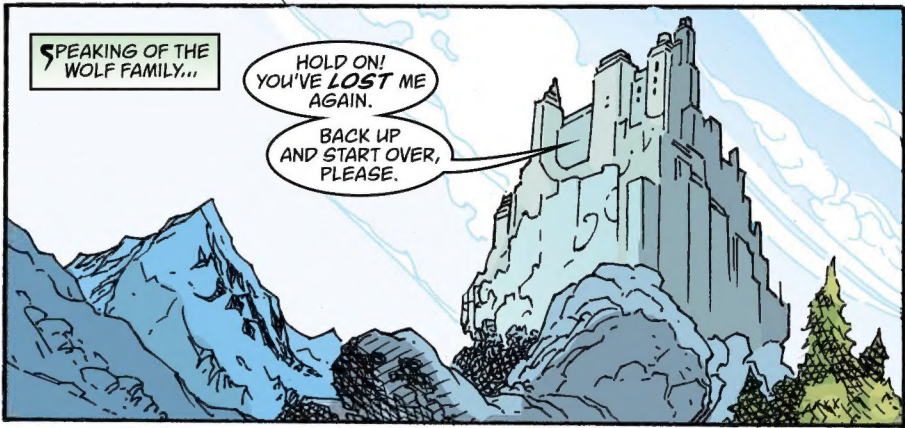
YES, *GRANTED*, THEY NEED TIME TO GRIEVE THEIR LOSS, BUT WHERE DID THEY DISAPPEAR TO SO MYSTERIOUSLY?

PERSONAL WOLF FAMILY BUSINESS. IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO SAY.

SPEAKING OF THE WOLF FAMILY...

HOLD ON! YOU'VE LOST ME AGAIN.

BACK UP AND START OVER, PLEASE.



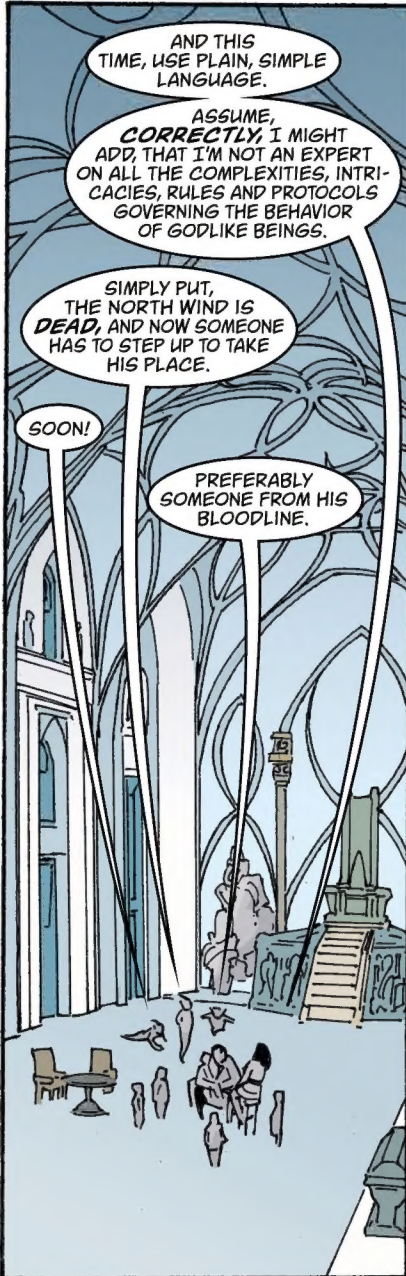
AND THIS TIME, USE PLAIN, SIMPLE LANGUAGE.

ASSUME, **CORRECTLY**, I MIGHT ADD, THAT I'M NOT AN EXPERT ON ALL THE COMPLEXITIES, INTRICACIES, RULES AND PROTOCOLS GOVERNING THE BEHAVIOR OF GODLIKE BEINGS.

SIMPLY PUT, THE NORTH WIND IS **DEAD**, AND NOW SOMEONE HAS TO STEP UP TO TAKE HIS PLACE.

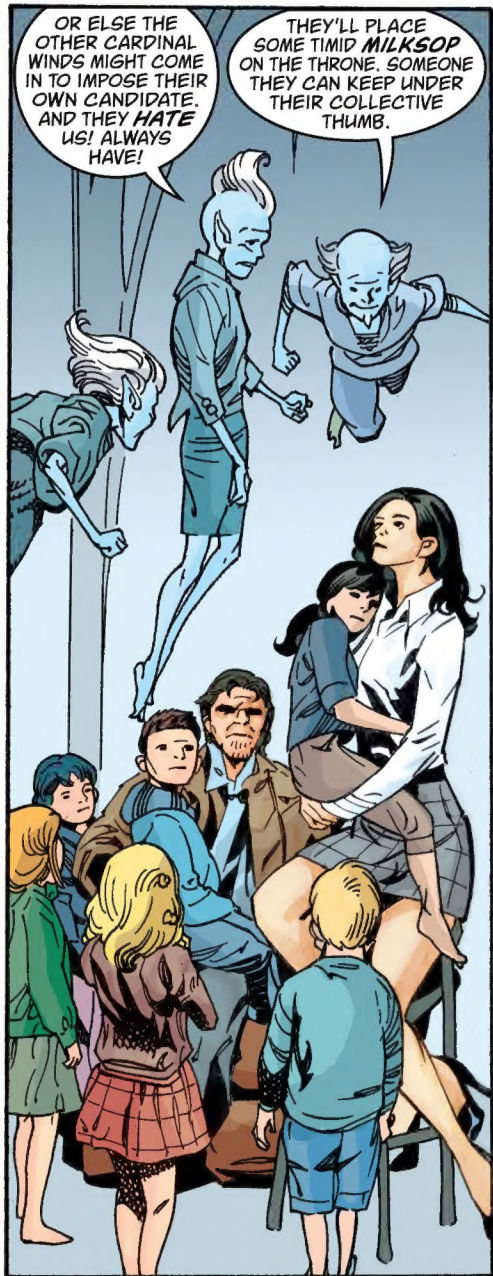
SOON!

PREFERABLY SOMEONE FROM HIS BLOODLINE.



OR ELSE THE OTHER CARDINAL WINDS MIGHT COME IN TO IMPOSE THEIR OWN CANDIDATE. AND THEY **HATE** US! ALWAYS HAVE!

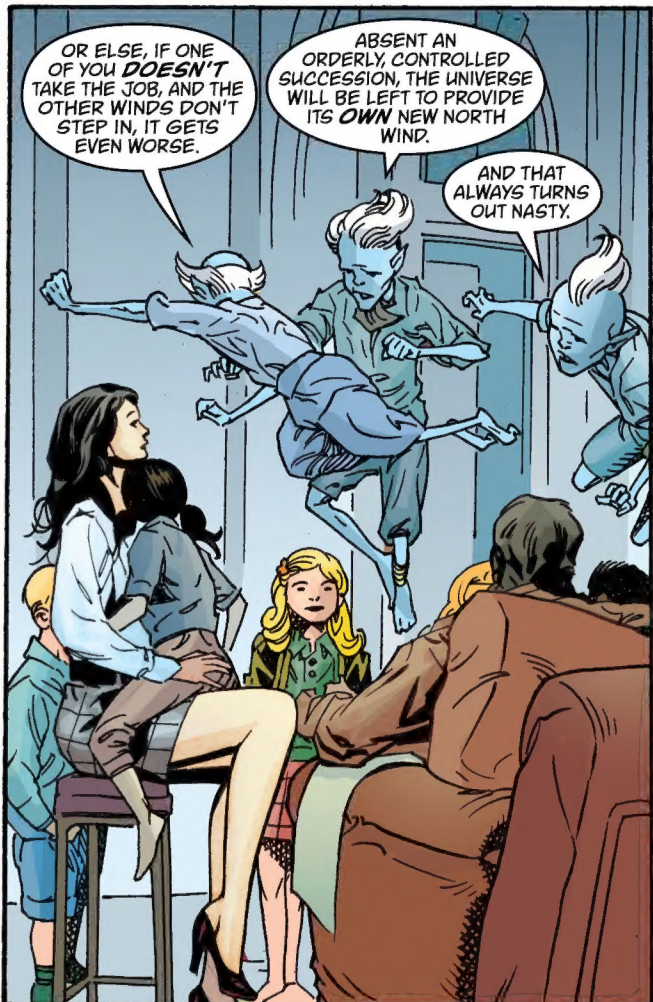
THEY'LL PLACE SOME **TIMID MILKSOP** ON THE THRONE. SOMEONE THEY CAN KEEP UNDER THEIR COLLECTIVE THUMB.





THE NORTH WIND WILL BE A WEAK AND GENTLE THING, AND THAT **SUCKS!** THE NORTH WIND SHOULD **ALWAYS** BE A BLOWER--A REAL HOWLER.

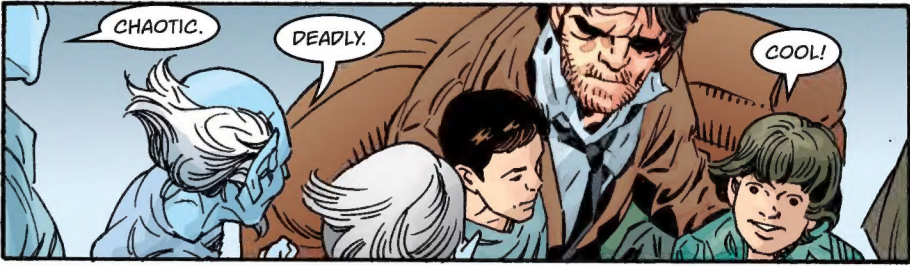
BOLD! BRASH! LARGER THAN LIFE!



OR ELSE, IF ONE OF YOU **DOESN'T** TAKE THE JOB, AND THE OTHER WINDS DON'T STEP IN, IT GETS EVEN WORSE.

ABSENT AN ORDERLY, CONTROLLED SUCCESSION, THE UNIVERSE WILL BE LEFT TO PROVIDE ITS **OWN** NEW NORTH WIND.

AND THAT ALWAYS TURNS OUT NASTY.



CHAOTIC.

DEADLY.

COOL!



I MEAN, **NOT** COOL WITH THE DANGER AND DEADLY STUFF, BUT IT'S COOL THAT ONE OF US GETS TO BE THE NEW NORTH WIND.



MEANWHILE, IN THE NOME KING'S PAN OZIAN EMPIRE, IMPERIAL DISTRICT NUMBER 47 (FORMERLY KNOWN AS EV)...

ALL OF THE REALLY BIG MAGICAL STUFF IS STORED IN THE IMPERIAL BUNKER IN DISTRICT ELEVEN.

USED TO BE CALLED GILLIKIN COUNTRY.

BUT TO GET FROM HERE TO THERE, WE HAVE TO FIND *SOME* WAY TO CROSS THE IMPASSABLE DESERT.

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS DISTRICT TWENTY-FOUR.

HEY.

DON'T BLAME ME FOR KEEPING UP WITH CURRENT EVENTS.



DIDN'T YOU SAY THERE ARE ROADS ACROSS THE DESERTS NOW?

WITH PUBLIC REST STOPS AND WAY STATIONS?

SURE. LOTS OF THEM.



BUT EVERY ONE PATROLLED BY THE BAD GUYS.

RUMBLE TUMBLE TOMS.

KALIDAHS.

GRUMPS AND GARGOYLES.

AND WORSE.



YIKES!

HOLD ON THERE!



OH, YEAH. ALMOST FORGOT THE AIR PATROL!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

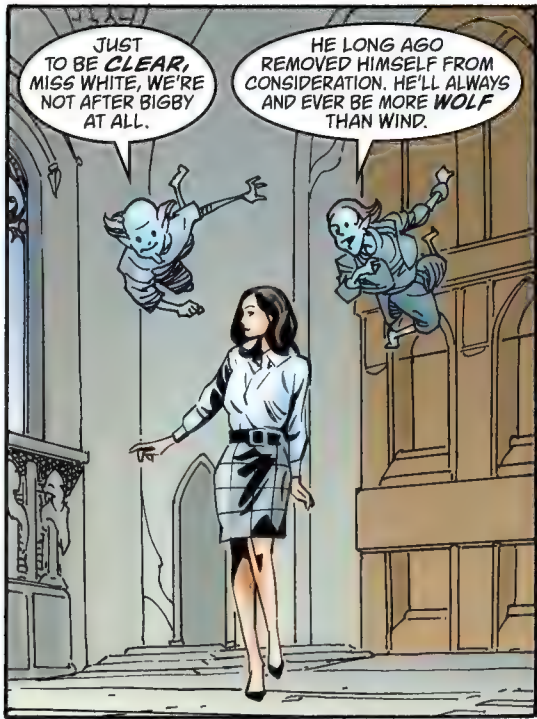




BACK AT THE KEEP OF THE MOUNTAIN KING...

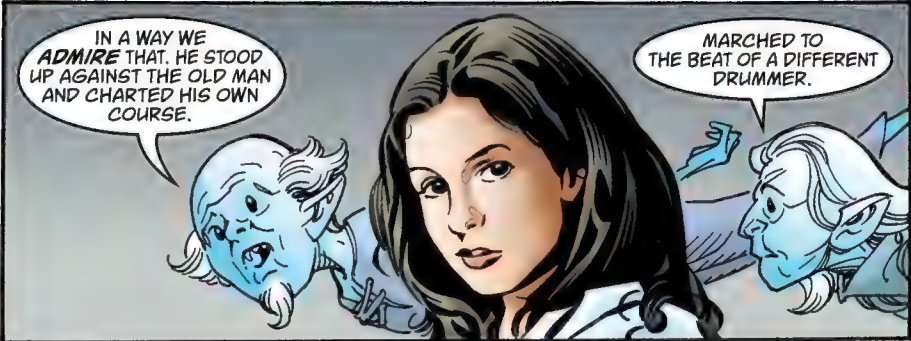


WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE ONE OF THE CUBS? MR. NORTH HAD SEVEN SONS. WHY NOT ONE OF THEM?



JUST TO BE CLEAR, MISS WHITE, WE'RE NOT AFTER BIGBY AT ALL.

HE LONG AGO REMOVED HIMSELF FROM CONSIDERATION. HE'LL ALWAYS AND EVER BE MORE WOLF THAN WIND.



IN A WAY WE ADMIRE THAT. HE STOOD UP AGAINST THE OLD MAN AND CHARTED HIS OWN COURSE.

MARCHED TO THE BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER.



AS FOR THE OTHER BROTHERS, WELL--THEY MIGHT BE BETTER, STRICTLY IN THE SENSE THAT THEY COULD LEARN TO EMBRACE THEIR HERITAGE.

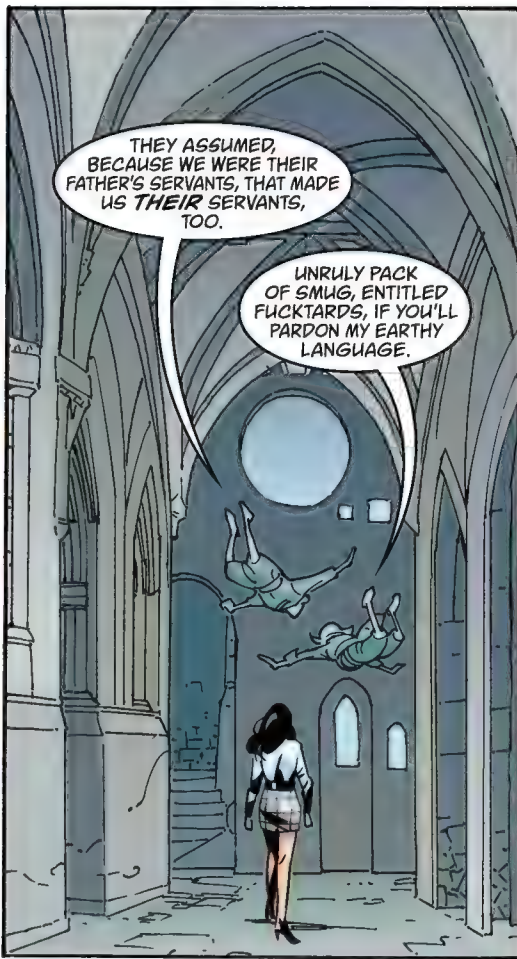
BUT THEY'RE ALL ASSHOLES.

IMMATURE DICKS OF THE LOWEST CALIBER.



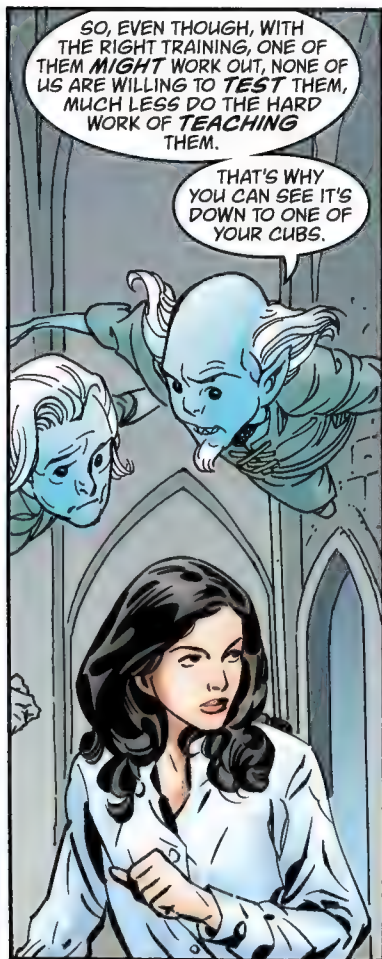
BASICALLY, WE HATE THEM.

THEY DID TREAT US RATHER BADLY WHILE THEY WERE HERE.



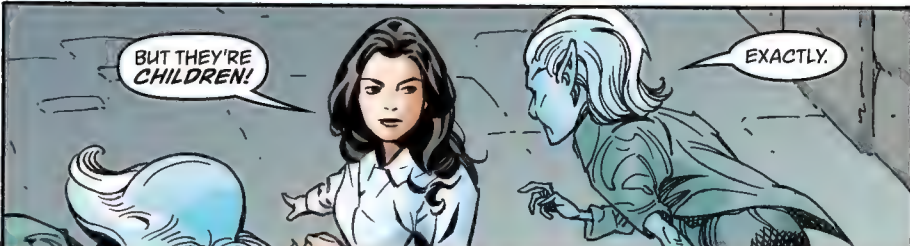
THEY ASSUMED, BECAUSE WE WERE THEIR FATHER'S SERVANTS, THAT MADE US *THEIR* SERVANTS, TOO.

UNRULY PACK OF SMUG, ENTITLED FUCKTARDS, IF YOU'LL PARDON MY EARTHY LANGUAGE.



SO, EVEN THOUGH, WITH THE RIGHT TRAINING, ONE OF THEM *MIGHT* WORK OUT, NONE OF US ARE WILLING TO *TEST* THEM, MUCH LESS DO THE HARD WORK OF *TEACHING* THEM.

THAT'S WHY YOU CAN SEE IT'S DOWN TO ONE OF YOUR CLUBS.



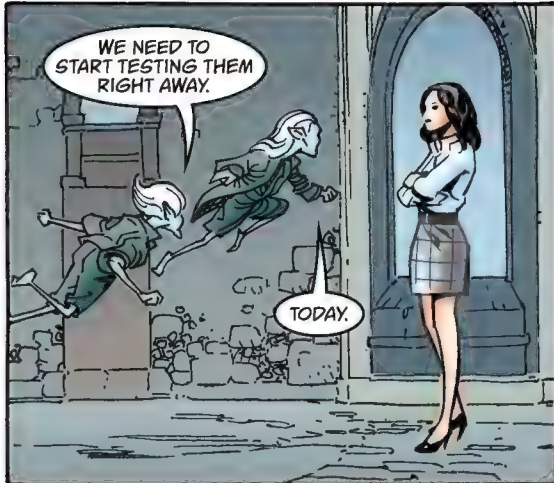
BUT THEY'RE CHILDREN!

EXACTLY.



THEY AREN'T SPOILED YET.

STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO TRAIN.



WE NEED TO START TESTING THEM RIGHT AWAY.

TODAY.



THE IMPASSABLE
DESERT.

WHERE'S
YOUR
PASS?

ROQUAT THE RED
FIRST EMPEROR of the
Restored Pan Ozian Empire

Your love and service
are the LEAST that
you owe

I DON'T
HAVE ONE. WHY WOULD
A MEMBER OF THE LOFTY
AIR PATROL NEED A LOWLY
ROAD PASS?

YOU'RE
USING THE
ROAD.

BECAUSE
I'M ESCORTING
PRISONERS,
DUMMY. OPEN
YOUR EYES!

I DON'T KNOW.
I THINK I SHOULD
REPORT THIS.

GOOD IDEA.
THANKS FOR REMINDING
ME THAT I'M OBLIGATED AS
AN OFFICER OF THE CORPS
TO REPORT YOU FOR INCOM-
PETENCE AND STUPIDITY
AND--WHAT ELSE?



WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER



OF COURSE!
GENERAL
LACK OF MILITARY
COMPORTMENT IN
A MANNER *SO*
EGREGIOUS
AS TO BRING
DISHONOR
TO THE IMPERIAL GUARD
FORCE (GROUND
DIVISION).



AND BY
EXTENSION TO HIS
IMPERIAL MAGNIFICENCE,
THE EMPEROR ROQUAT THE
FIRST--OR *ROKEY*, AS
HE LIKES ME TO
CALL HIM!

NO FAIR.
I ONLY ASKED
FOR YOUR PASS.
I'M *REQUIRED*
TO CHECK
PASSES.



EXCEPT WHEN SOMEONE IS
OBEYING *VERBAL* INSTRUCTIONS
FROM NONE OTHER THAN PRINCE
GOOGLEY MOOGLEY
HIMSELF.

I DON'T
KNOW WHO
THAT IS.



YOU DON'T *KNOW* THE
GREAT PRINCE *GOOGLEY*
MOOGLEY?!
B



EGADS!
THE DEPTHS OF
YOUR IGNORANCE
KNOWS NO
BOTTOM!



PRINCE
GOOGLEY MOOGLEY
ONLY HAPPENS TO BE
OUR DEAR EMPEROR'S
NEW RIGHT-HAND
MAN.

BEING
GROOMED FOR
SUCCESSION--OR
SO I HEARD.



ABOUT
TO BE ADOPTED
AS HIS OFFICIAL
HEIR.

BUT YOU DIDN'T
HEAR THAT FROM *ME*.
BEING PRIVY TO INSIDER
INFORMATION CAN BE
SUCH A BURDEN.



ONE SLIP
OF THE TONGUE
INTO THE WRONG
EAR, AND--

WELL, AS
WE ALL KNOW, THAT'S
HOW PRINCESS WEEVIL
BLOT HARSTAINS (OF
THE SOUTH MERRYLAND
HARSTAINS) LOST HER
CUSHY SINECURE.

UH--I
DON'T KNOW HER,
EITHER.



NO ONE DOES
NOW--HER BEING SO
NEWLY HEADLESS
AND ALL.

SO, ABOUT
THIS NONSENSE OF
ROAD PASSES...

ELSEWHERE, ON A
DISTANT WORLD...

EXCELLENT,
MRS. SPRATT!

PERFECT
PARRY AND RIPOSTE
COMBINATION!



YOU'RE
TURNING OUT TO BE
MY **MOST** GIFTED
STUDENT.

THANK YOU,
MR. HOLT, BUT
PLEASE DON'T CALL
ME **SPRATT**
ANYMORE.

THAT'S A
NAME FROM
A **DEAD**
PAST.

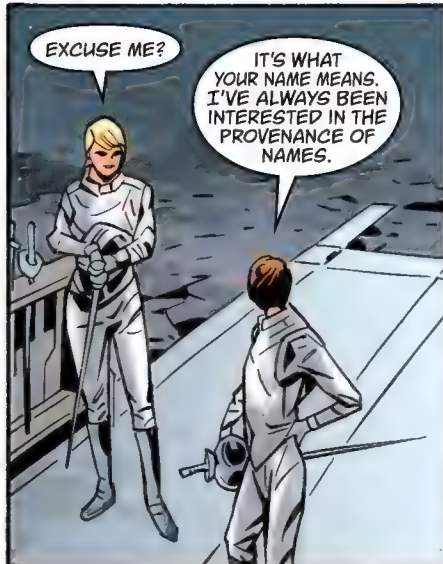


CALL ME
LEIGH.

OR MISS DUGLAS, MY
MAIDEN NAME, IF YOU THINK
TOO MUCH **FAMILIARITY**
IS INAPPROPRIATE.



"STRANGER FROM
THE **DARK MEADOW**," OR
"DARK STRANGER FROM THE
MEADOW," DEPENDING ON
HOW ONE CHOOSES TO
PARSE IT.



EXCUSE ME?

IT'S WHAT
YOUR NAME MEANS.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN
INTERESTED IN THE
PROVENANCE OF
NAMES.



NOT HERE. THIS IS AMERICA IN THE MUNDY, WHERE NAMES HAVE NO MEANINGS.

THEY'RE JUST **SOUNDS**.



SHALL WE BEGIN AGAIN?

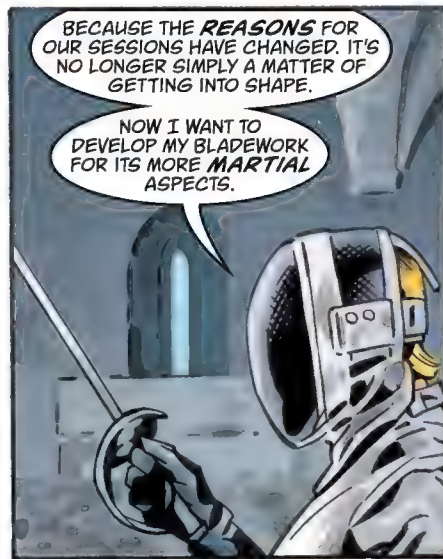
AT YOUR SERVICE, THOUGH I MUST CONFESS, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE SO INTENT ON CONTINUING YOUR LESSONS.

YOU NEVER LIKED THEM.



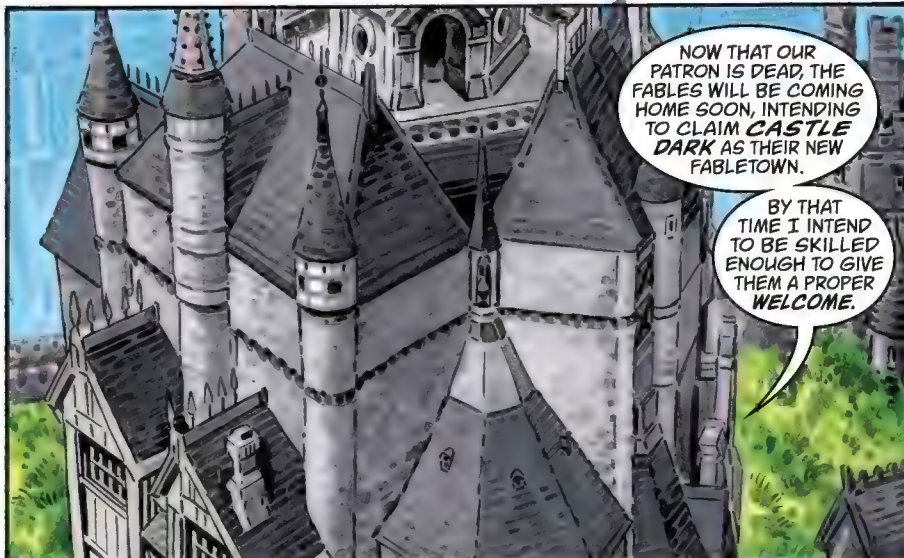
YOUR PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION IS COMPLETE. YOU'RE SLIM, FIT AND FANTASTICALLY TONED, IF I MAY BE FORGIVEN THE OBSERVATION.

AND YET YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR OUR SESSIONS HAS ONLY **INCREASED**.



BECAUSE THE **REASONS** FOR OUR SESSIONS HAVE CHANGED. IT'S NO LONGER SIMPLY A MATTER OF GETTING INTO SHAPE.

NOW I WANT TO DEVELOP MY BLADEWORK FOR ITS MORE **MARTIAL** ASPECTS.

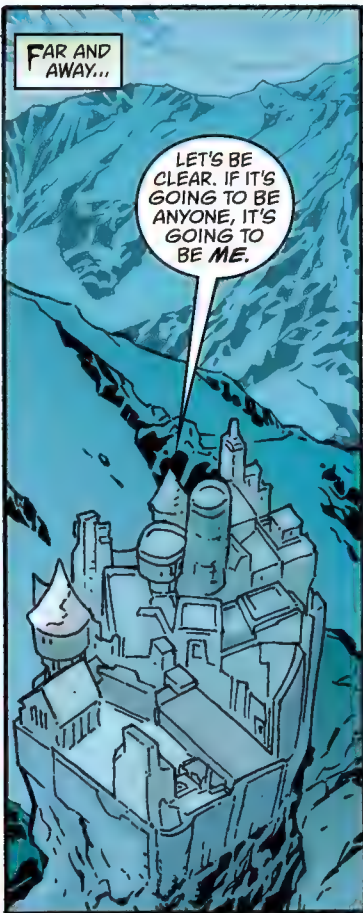


NOW THAT OUR PATRON IS DEAD, THE FABLES WILL BE COMING HOME SOON, INTENDING TO CLAIM **CASTLE DARK** AS THEIR NEW FABLETOWN.

BY THAT TIME I INTEND TO BE SKILLED ENOUGH TO GIVE THEM A PROPER **WELCOME**.

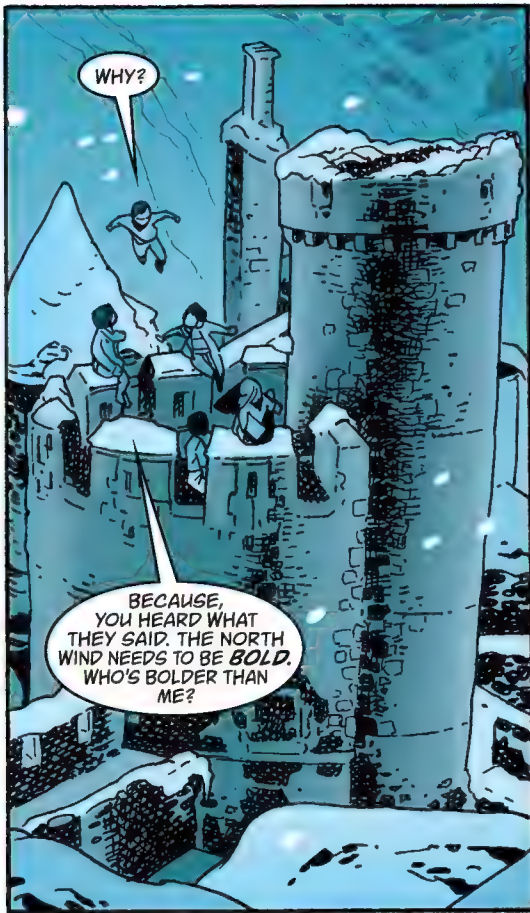
FAR AND AWAY...

LET'S BE CLEAR. IF IT'S GOING TO BE ANYONE, IT'S GOING TO BE ME.



WHY?

BECAUSE, YOU HEARD WHAT THEY SAID. THE NORTH WIND NEEDS TO BE BOLD. WHO'S BOLDER THAN ME?



NO ONE, THAT'S WHO!

CERTAINLY NOT WIMPY WINTER OR TIMID THERESE, OR--



YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE GLAD GRAMPAW'S DEAD!

I AM NOT!



YOU TAKE THAT BACK!





THAT'S WHERE HE'D READ TO US, DADDY.

OVER AND OVER FROM EVERY STORYBOOK IN HIS LIBRARY--ANY STORY WE WANTED.

IT WAS MY VERY BEST FAVORITE TIME EVER.



I'M SUCH A BIG BABY.

NOT LIKE YOU.

I MISS HIM SO MUCH.



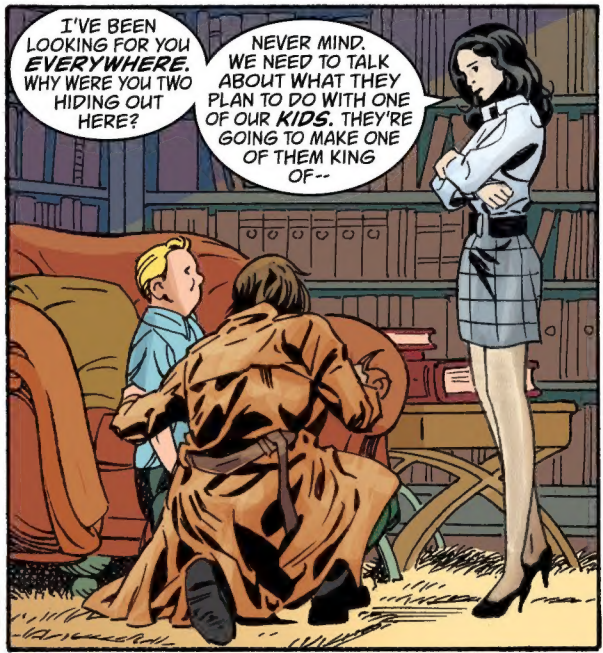
STOP THAT, AMBROSE.

CRYING FOR YOUR DEAD GRANDFATHER DOESN'T MAKE ANYONE A **BABY**.



LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT HIM THAT I NEVER ADMITTED BEFORE.

OH, THERE YOU ARE.



I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU **EVERYWHERE**. WHY WERE YOU TWO HIDING OUT HERE?

NEVER MIND. WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO WITH ONE OF OUR **KIDS**. THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE ONE OF THEM **KING** OF--



KING? OH NO!





GRANDDAD WAS A KING? A REAL KING?

WELL, SURE, HONEY.

HE WAS MANY THINGS. KING OF THE NORTH, AMONG OTHERS.



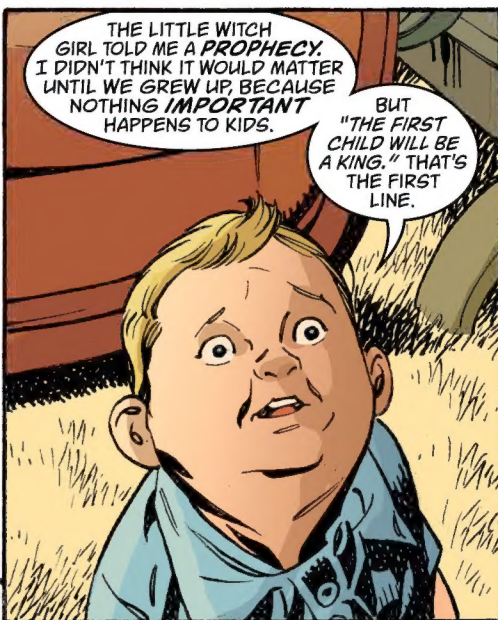
I DIDN'T REALIZE...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SWEETIE? YOU LOOK PALE AS A GHOST.



THERE'S SOMETHING I NEVER TOLD ANY OF YOU BECAUSE--WELL, BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHY. I GUESS IT SCARED ME AND I DIDN'T WANT TO ADMIT IT AND BE A SISSY WOLF.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. TELL US WHAT YOU NEED TO TELL US.



THE LITTLE WITCH GIRL TOLD ME A PROPHECY. I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD MATTER UNTIL WE GREW UP BECAUSE NOTHING IMPORTANT HAPPENS TO KIDS.

BUT "THE FIRST CHILD WILL BE A KING." THAT'S THE FIRST LINE.



IT'S STARTING ALREADY.



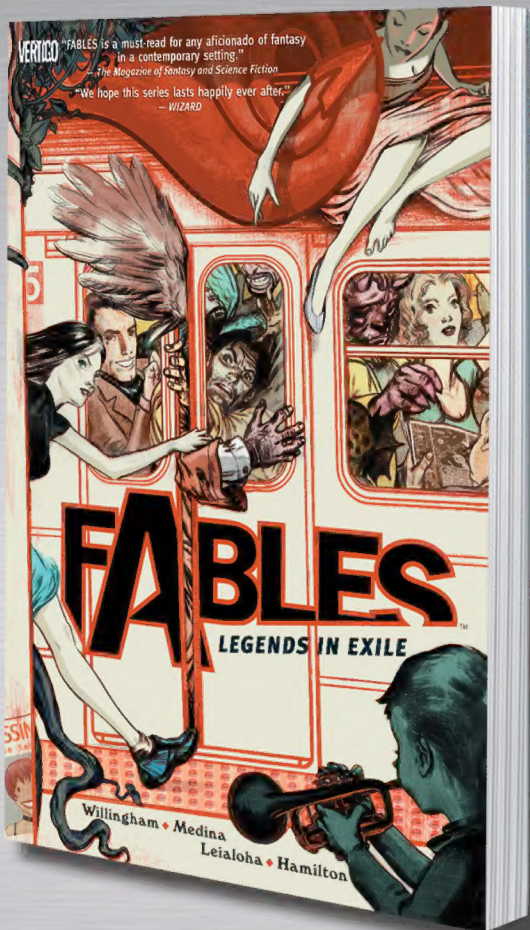
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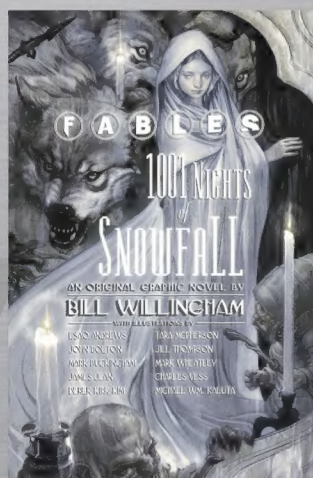
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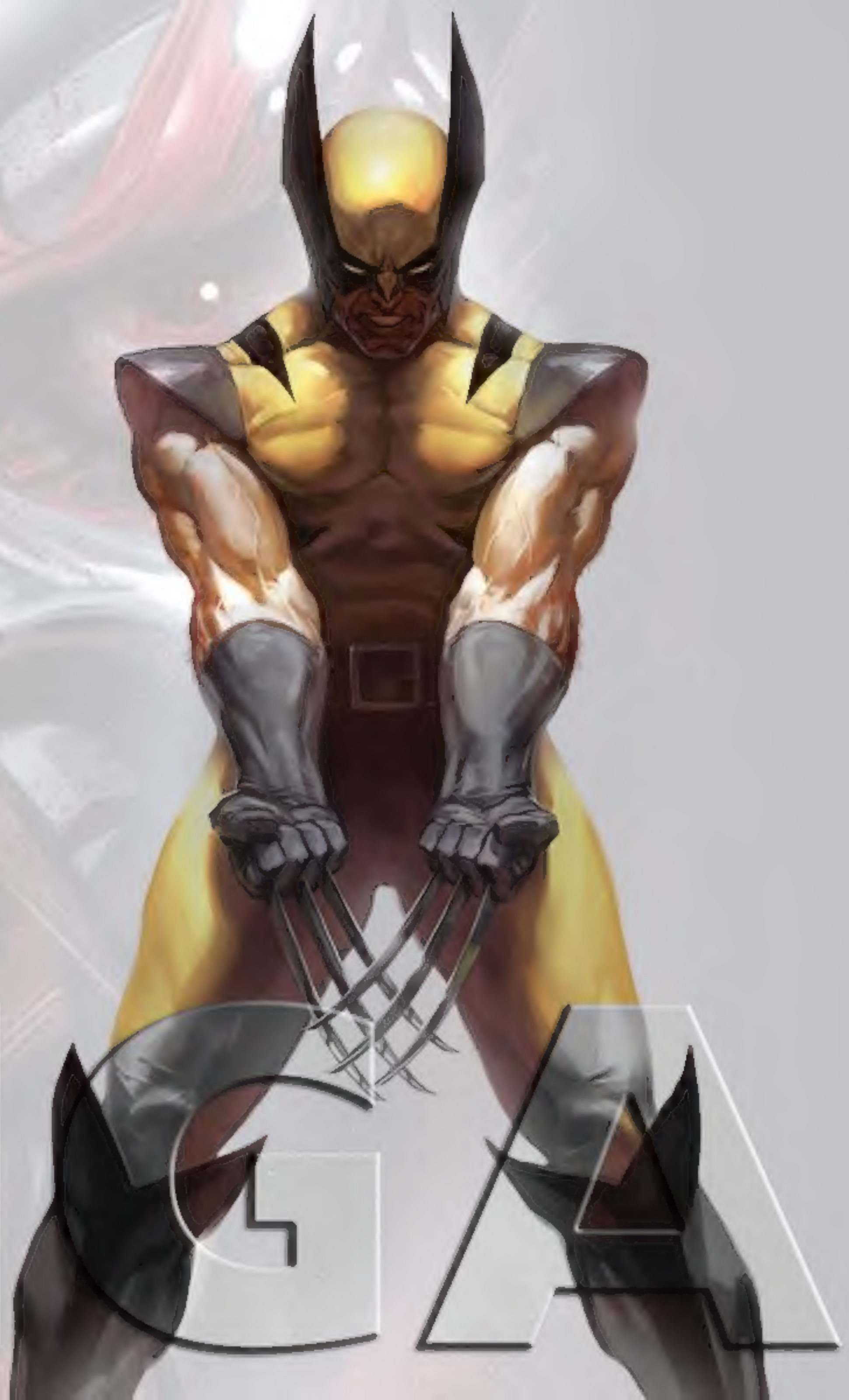


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